

United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

APHIS Directive 4351. 1

7/20/ 93

REDUCTION-IN-FORCE

1. PURPOSE

This Directive establishes the policy and gives responsibilities and guidelines for implementing a reduction-in-force (RIF).

2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This Directive replaces APHIS Directive 425.1, dated 10/11/89.

3. AUTHORITY

Federal Personnel Manual, Chapter 351-1.

4. POLICY

- a. It is Agency policy to comply with all Federal and Departmental rules and regulations, as well as the terms of any negotiated bargaining agreements. Every effort will be made to avoid or lessen the adverse impact of a RIF. Such measures include, but are not limited to, those recommended in Federal/Departmental regulations.
- b. Competitive areas have been designated as shown in Attachment 1. These may not be changed within 90 days of the effective date of the RIF without prior approval of the office of Personnel Management.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Supervisors and managers will:
 - (1) Notify the servicing personnel office (SPO) in writing, through appropriate Agency officials, of the need to conduct a RIF. (See APHIS Directive 400.4, Delegation of Personnel Authority.) The notice should be prepared as far in advance as possible and must include:
 - (a) A thorough description of the circumstances which require a RIF.

- (b) Actions taken to avoid or lessen the adverse impact of a RIF.
 - (c) Series, titles, grades, and geographic locations of positions to be abolished and of the vacant positions expected to be filled.
 - (d) A proposed effective date.
- (2) Provide recognized labor organizations advance written notice of the need to conduct a RIF affecting represented employees in accordance with applicable negotiated agreements, with copies to the SPO and the Human Resources Division (HRD).

b. The SPO will:

- (1) Implement and conduct the RIF in accordance with established regulations, policies, and procedures.
- (2) Provide technical advice and guidance to managers, supervisors, and employees.
- (3) Establish appropriate competitive levels and make the records readily available for review.
- (4) For each RIF conducted, record Agency decisions pertaining to discretionary issues such as use of vacancies, waiving qualifications, assignment rights of excepted service employees, etc.
- (5) Issue general notices, when applicable, to all employees within the competitive area.
- (6) Establish the effective date for the RIF.
- (7) Conduct outplacement programs and activities for adversely affected employees.
- (8) Maintain official subject-matter files pertinent to the RIF.
- (9) Furnish reports and, as requested, other information to HRD.
- (10) Serve as Agency expert witness during appeals/grievances.

c. HRD will:

- (1) Develop Agency policy and provide interpretation, advice, and guidance to the servicing personnel offices on statutory and regulatory requirements.
- (2) Serve as liaison with USDA, Office of Personnel (OP).
- (3) Obtain approvals, through OP, from the Office of Personnel Management to change competitive areas, to use the early voluntary retirement authority, as well as to obtain clarification on complex issues.
- (4) Negotiate the impact and implementation of the RIF in accordance with the applicable negotiated agreements, as needed.
- (5) Serve as Agency representative during appeals/grievances.
- (6) Review actions for compliance with Federal, Departmental, and Agency regulations, policies, and procedures through personnel management evaluations and/or other inspections.

d. Employees will:

- (1) Provide records, for their Official Personnel Files, updating their qualifications as changes occur and/or as requested by the SPO. These records are used to determine assignment rights to other positions.
- (2) Respond in writing to official correspondence by due dates indicated. If a written response is not received, it will be considered a negative reply/declination-which could adversely impact on entitlement.
- (3) Provide full explanations of why they are unable to accept reassignments outside their local commuting areas. This information is used to determine eligibility for unemployment compensation.
- (4) As needed, initiate job searches and actively participate in outplacement efforts in order to enhance opportunities for employment.

- (5) Avail themselves of counseling sessions and other Agency-provided assistance in order to understand procedures, entitlement, benefits, etc.
- (6) Contact State employment boards or agencies to obtain information on entitlement to benefits, etc., if they are to be separated or decline positions offered in lieu of separation. Such contacts will enable employees to make informed decisions.

It is Agency policy to avoid a RIF. However, should a reduction in the size of the workforce become necessary, the Agency will make every effort to minimize the adverse impact on employees. The cooperation and participation of employees in the above activities will also help reduce the hardships resulting from a RIF.

6. INQUIRIES

Inquiries should be directed through administrative channels to the servicing personnel office.

/s/ Lonnie J. King
Acting Administrator

Attachment

Attachment 1
APHIS Directive 4351.1
7/20/93

Competitive Areas

Approved: January 18, 1989

Headquarters: By each of the major subdivisions within a local commuting area.

The Office of the Administrator is a separate competitive area.

Frederick, MD, is included within the local commuting area of the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

Headquarters offices in other local commuting areas are separate competitive areas.

Field: By each activity within a local commuting area.

Senior Guidance on RIF's and furloughs will be provided
Executive by the office of Personnel, USDA.
Services:

Change 1
8/25/93